

have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 3597.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3597. I thank my colleagues in the Senate. I thank my colleague Mr. GOODLATTE, as well as Mr. HARKIN, for introducing this legislation. I introduced its House counterpart, H.R. 6981.

This bill is, quite simply, a technical fix of the 2008 farm bill.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for their cooperation in bringing this technical fix to the floor. With its passage, we will ensure the fiscal year 2008 funding for a very nutritional program, the Community Food Projects.

Due to an unintended error in title IV of the farm bill, we mistakenly limited USDA's authority to award grants under this program in this fiscal year. This same fix was passed by unanimous consent in the Senate, and CBO has scored this bill at zero.

Community Food Projects is a forward-thinking grant program that encourages innovative local efforts to expand the availability of affordable and healthful foods. This program is critical to those who live in both urban and rural areas who may not have regular access to nutritional foods needed to raise a healthy family.

I urge my colleagues to voice their support for healthy families and vote "yes" on S. 3597.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my colleague, the subcommittee chairman, as well as Chairman PETERSON, for their work, along with others on this side of the aisle, and join them in supporting S. 3597.

This bill makes a technical correction to the Nutrition title of the 2008 farm bill. This measure will ensure funds allocated for Community Food Projects in fiscal year 2008 remain available through fiscal year 2009. Without this correction, valuable grant funding will be lost.

S. 3597 will allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry this funding forward to provide grants that help communities respond to local nutrition issues.

Because of the importance of this funding and the value that communities find in utilizing these funds to help people in need, providing food for them, I urge my colleagues to support S. 3597.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, again, I want to encourage support for the Community Food Projects. This is a valuable grant. This is a technical error that was done. I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE)

for his support in this bipartisan effort. This is a correction of a technical error.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3597.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2816) to provide for the appointment of the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2816

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER BY THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

Section 103(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 113(d)) is amended—

- (1) by striking paragraph (3); and
- (2) redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2816.

This measure seeks to change how the Chief Human Capital Officer is appointed by the Department of Homeland Security. It will bring DHS in line with other Federal agencies who are able to choose whether they have a Chief Human Capital Officer that is a career employee or a political appointee. Granting this authority now is important to transition to the next administration.

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The Chief Human Capital Officer serves as the Department's lead execu-

tive for all matters relating to workforce management. Among the responsibilities of the Chief Human Capital Officer are strategic planning, training and development, recruitment, compensation, benefits, and employee relations.

The task of serving as the CHCO at DHS is particularly challenging when you consider that since DHS' inception, it has faced a series of personnel challenges, including; merging 22 separate agencies into one cabinet-level agency with a combined workforce of over 200,000 people; promoting integration among employees and an appreciation of their role within DHS; and confronting ongoing recruitment and retention challenges.

Low employee morale has been a chronic issue for DHS since it was established in 2003. In fact, in both its 2004 and 2006 workforce surveys, the Office of Personnel Management found that DHS' employee morale ranked among the lowest of any cabinet-level department.

In the 2006 OPM survey, the Department was rated "dead last" in job satisfaction among its peers and received very low marks on leadership and management capabilities.

Just last year, the Department's own internal Employee Survey revealed that poor morale remained a major problem. Workers cited pay, performance, and promotion practices as some of the sources of their discontent.

Moreover, documented incidents reveal that the management within some of the most prominent DHS components do not value diversity in their operations. This, too, contributes to low morale. These results are clearly unacceptable in our government. The next CHCO has to make it "job-one" to tackle the underlying causes of the discontent.

With the change in administration, the next CHCO has an enormous opportunity to turn things around. The Department must properly address employee dissatisfaction by focusing and implementing career development for its employees. DHS should also ensure that its employees receive proper training and adequate resources necessary to get their jobs done.

DHS must recruit the best and the brightest because we're asking them to do one of the most important jobs in the Federal Government, protect this country. These efforts can only be achieved through an effective Chief Human Capital Officer. Unfortunately, over the past 5½ years, six people have held this office at DHS. That is a tremendous turnover. Stable leadership will help DHS address the magnitude and multitude of its workforce management challenges. This legislation will help provide that stable leadership.

I stand in support of this legislation, and urge its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it's wonderful to be on the floor here this Saturday evening with you and with my colleague on the full committee. And this is one of several bills that we are bringing to the floor to finish up the work of the Homeland Security Committee for this Congress.

I rise in support of S. 2816, this bill to provide the Secretary of Homeland Security with the authority to appoint the Chief Human Capital Officer at the Department of Homeland Security. The bill was introduced by Senators VOINOVICH and AKAKA, and it repeals a provision in the Homeland Security Act that includes this official among DHS officials to be appointed by the President.

This bill will provide uniformity by allowing DHS to operate under the same guidelines as other Federal agencies, where the head of the agency has the authority to designate the director of human resources.

The Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight has held a number of hearings on personnel issues at DHS, and we understand, all of us on the full committee, just how important this bill is.

DHS Undersecretary for Management, Ms. Elaine Duke, has informed Congress about the need for this legislation. Under Elaine Duke's effective leadership and guidance, a number of significant improvements have been made at DHS. She is now overseeing the transition of DHS to the next administration, which is critical to the continued operations of the Department and the security of our Nation.

As everyone in this Chamber knows, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security was the greatest reorganization of the Federal Government since the creation of the Defense Department. And it's had its ups and downs, but I think now it is generally moving in the right direction, and I believe the current Secretary of DHS is to be commended for the tremendous work that he has done.

The Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for fiscal year 2008 included a number of provisions to strengthen personnel programs and systems at DHS. We in the House passed that bill last year, but the Senate did not. Unfortunately, the House did not act on a DHS authorization bill in 2008. I would hope this would be a priority for the 111th Congress early next year. Until then, I would urge passage of the bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, in closing, DHS has a lot of room for improvement when it comes to managing its workforce, as we know in the committee. This bill gives the Secretary the authority to put someone into the position that has a career and work-

force development in the Federal Government. This is an important step.

I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2816.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMENDING HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1429) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the employees of the Department of Homeland Security, their partners at all levels of government, and the millions of emergency response providers and law enforcement agents nationwide should be commended for their dedicated service on the Nation's front lines in the war against acts of terrorism.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1429

Whereas it has been 7 years since the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States and its people on September 11, 2001;

Whereas terrorists around the world continue to plot and plan attacks against the United States and its interests and foreign allies;

Whereas, as evidenced by a suicide bomb attack in Jerusalem that killed 22 people and wounded 140 on March 27, 2002, a car bomb that exploded outside a Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, on August 5, 2003, killing 10 people and wounding 150, 10 bombs that exploded on 4 commuter trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004, killing 191 people, a major anti-terrorist operation by British Police disrupts an alleged bomb plot targeting multiple airplanes bound for the United States flying through Heathrow Airport, near London on August 10, 2006, citizens across the country and in the world should remain vigilant, prepared, and informed;

Whereas during the month of September, the Nation observes National Preparedness Month which is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, and encourages all citizens to prepare themselves and their families for possible emergencies by getting an emergency supply kit that will last 72 hours, making a family emergency plan, being informed, and getting involved in the community in organizations such as Citizen Corps, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our Nation safer, stronger, and better prepared;

Whereas acts of terrorism can exact a tragic human toll, resulting in significant numbers of casualties and disrupting hundreds of thousands of lives, causing serious damage to our Nation's critical infrastructure, and inflicting billions of dollars of costs on both our public and private sectors;

Whereas in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the continuing grave

threat of terrorism, Congress established the Department of Homeland Security in March 2003, bringing together 22 disparate Federal entities, enhancing their capabilities with major new divisions emphasizing terrorism-related information analysis, infrastructure protection, and science and technology, and focusing their employees on the critical mission of defending our Nation against acts of terrorism;

Whereas since its creation, the employees of the Department of Homeland Security have endeavored to carry out this mission with commendable dedication, working with other Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies and partners at all levels of Government to help secure our Nation's borders, airports, seaports, critical infrastructure, and communities against terrorist attacks;

Whereas our Nation's firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders selflessly and repeatedly risk their lives to fulfill their new mission of helping to prevent, protect against, and prepare to respond to acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies;

Whereas State, local, territorial, and tribal government officials, the private sector, and ordinary citizens across the country have been working in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal Government agencies to enhance our ability to prevent, deter, protect against, and prepare to respond to acts of terrorism;

Whereas all people of the United States can assist in promoting our Nation's overall terrorism and emergency preparedness by remaining vigilant and alert, reporting suspicious activity to proper authorities, and preparing themselves and their families for potential terrorist attacks; and

Whereas all people of the United States should take the opportunity during National Preparedness Month in September 2008 to take steps at home, work, and school to enhance their ability to assist in preventing, protecting against, and preparing to respond to acts of terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the public servants of the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies for their outstanding contributions to our Nation's homeland security;

(2) salutes the dedication of State, local, territorial, and tribal government officials, the private sector, and citizens across the country for their efforts to enhance the Nation's ability to prevent, deter, protect against, and prepare to respond to potential acts of terrorism;

(3) expresses the Nation's appreciation for the sacrifices and commitment of our law enforcement and emergency response personnel in preventing and preparing to respond to acts of terrorism;

(4) supports the goals and ideals of National Preparedness Month as they relate to the threat of terrorism; and

(5) urges the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Preparedness Month with appropriate events and activities that promote citizen and community preparedness to respond to acts of terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) each will control 20 minutes.